

Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 1, 1879

VOL. XI NEW YORK, DECEMBER 3, 1917 NO. 8

DR. DUTTON'S REFLECTIONS ON RE-READING VERGIL

A very interesting and helpful paper is the one entitled Reflections on Re-Reading Vergil, which Dr. Emily Helen Dutton, Professor of Latin and Greek at Tennessee College, read at the annual meeting of the Tennessee Philological Association, in Nashville, on February 25, 1916, as Presidential Address (30 pages).

In the first point that Dr. Dutton makes I have long been deeply interested. It is the fashion to speak of Vergil as the poet of profound melancholy (compare Tennyson's famous dictum on this point). That Vergil does brood on the eternal sadness of things cannot be denied, but Dr. Dutton is right in maintaining (5) that Vergil possessed that

underlying sense of humor which relieves and sustains the spirit in the hardest battles of life, often wholly unexpressed, sometimes unsuspected by the friend who walks beside us, an inward source of refreshing, supplying that daily inner renewal of the joy in things that goes far in maintaining the spirit which feels continually the infinite pathos at the heart of nature and the life of man.

In this aspect of Vergil I see a very simple explanation of the meaning of the famous phrase, *molle atque facetum*, which Horace, in Sermones 1.10.40, used of Vergil, in 35 B. C. or before, when Vergil had as yet published only the Catalepton and the Eclogues, though he was at work already on the Georgics. On this point I had a brief paper in The American Journal of Philology, for June, 1917 (38.194–199). In that paper some of the evidences of the sense of humor which Dr. Dutton finds in Vergil were put together before I read her article. She accepts as genuine the poem in the Catalepton which represents the writer as expressing his satisfaction upon abandoning other studies to take up that of the Epicurean philosophy, as well as the poem beginning

> Sabinus ille, quem videtis, hospites,
> ait fuisse mulio celerrimus,

plainly a parody on Catullus 4. In both these poems she sees suggestions of "natural gaiety of spirit". She finds American humor in the description of the plight of the cautious old pilot Menoetes (Aen. 5.189–192), and of Aeneas when he gives the consolation prize to Nisus (5.318–361). She finds humor also in the rough banter of the shepherds in Eclogue 3. But she lays more stress on the delicate humor shown in some of the well-known passages in the Georgics: 1.181–182 (which is lighted up by Horace, Ars Poetica 139), 1.378 (the imitation of a croaking frog, recalling Aristophanes), 1.388–389 (here stress is laid on "the alliterative solemn stateliness of sound which marks the step of the solitary raven as he stalks along the dry sand and calls for rain"), and 1.246–247, which T. E. Page, in the Introduction to his edition of the Georgics, characterizes "as the one instance in the Georgics of broad humor" (the passage describes a man making wry faces at a bitter taste). The most charming case of Vergil's most delicate humor she finds (9) in Georgics 4.86–87 at the conclusion of the description of the combat of the bees:

> Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
> pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescent.

Here, Dr. Dutton says,

pulveris iactu might suggest burial to a Roman ear, as it recalls to us the appeal of Horace's shipwrecked mariner in Od. 1.28.35.

This discussion I find interesting as far as it goes, but the matter was better put long ago by A. Sidgwick in his edition of Vergil 1.15–16, 39–40 (quoted in full in my article in The American Journal of Philology referred to above).

In the discussion of the Eclogues (9–11) occurs a paragraph which it seems worth while to quote in full:

Our own experience of a constant sorrow and underlying sadness in the face of the present war, which we realize only enough to give us a faint conception of its sobering effect upon the peoples actually engaged, and of the great travail of soul which must forever leave its mark upon those who have lived through it, helps us to understand how so tender a spirit as Vergil's must have been deeply and permanently affected by the suffering through which he had seen his country and his countrymen passing during the long civil wars of his early manhood. At this age an impressionable nature like his would reflect most seriously upon these great events that were moving the nation and threatening that Rome which he had looked upon first with the wondering eyes of a countryman, like his own Tityrus in the first Eclogue, but which in his student days there he had come to love as "the most beautiful thing in the world", and, since he held aloof from actual participation in the wars, he would be chiefly impressed by the human suffering which it entailed and which he saw before his eyes. Nor was he himself untouched by its oppression, for his father's little farm was confiscated as a part of the tract about Cremona assigned to the veterans of Philippi.

This Vergilian pathos finds expression often in certain recurring tragic words (14–16). One of these is *infelix*, heard some fifty times in the Aeneid,

usually in disaster, but sometimes it strikes a warning note even in the midst of joy, as when, in her first delight in the companionship of Aeneas, the ill-fated Dido prolonged the night with conversation and drank in deep draughts of love. . . .

Sometimes the impending doom is foreshadowed by *nequiquam*, or by *frustra*, or by *miserande*.

It is as if Vergil could never forget an all-abiding sense of human helplessness in the hands of fate, and would teach us by continually repeated examples the lesson which he cannot refrain from explicitly expressing as Turnus exultantly puts on the belt of the slain Pallas, which is later to cause his own death when Aeneas, about to yield to his appeal for mercy, catches sight of the spoils stripped from his friend:

> Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae
> et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis![1]

"The heart of man knows not its coming fate and destiny, nor how to keep the bounds of moderation when exalted by prosperity!" Here is the old lesson of Greek tragedy, of the φθόνος and νέμεσις that follow overweening pride and exultation in good fortune, and Vergil had no doubt been impressed by the words of Aeschylus' chorus in the Agamemnon (750–756):

> "There lives an old saying from the ancient days,
> In memories of men, that high estate
> Full-grown brings forth its young, nor childless dies,
> But that from good success
> Springs to the race a woe insatiable"[2].

Dr. Dutton next (16) remarks that sometimes

The feeling of human helplessness is combined in Vergil with that of human ignorance and marked by *inscius* or *nescius*, *immemor*, *imprudens*.

Compare Aeneid 1.712, 718, 2.307, 11.182–183. I may note here by way of illustration Catullus's use in his Epyllion (64) of *immemor* and of *inscius* to describe Theseus deserting Ariadne.

Dr. Dutton writes next most interestingly (16) on Vergil's relation to his farm. To this, to be sure, she finds but one bit of direct testimony in Vergil, in the short poem in the Catalepton in which the writer invokes the little farm of his former teacher Siro, which, when the farm at Mantua was confiscated, furnished a refuge to the writer and his father. Eclogues 9 and 1 are also important in this connection. On pages 16–17 we read:

This flight with his father may have been in his mind as he wrote of Aeneas' flight from Troy carrying his aged father Anchises. It may be that we owe to his own great devotion to his father, to which Suetonius further bears witness, the marvelous pathos and tenderness with which the parental relation is represented in the Aeneid. We might explain the Leitmotiv of the repeated appeal to the hope of the rising Iulus (spes surgentis Iuli) by which the father is spurred on in times of need, as part of the destiny which Aeneas is called to fulfill, but one cannot read the entire Aeneid without being markedly impressed by the truth and depth of feeling in the poet's heart whenever this chord is struck. In Daedalus' commemoration of his story upon the doors of Apollo's temple <we find these words>, "You, too, O Icarus, would have borne a great part had grief permitted. Twice he attempted to depict in gold the sad story of your fall, twice your father's hands fell and failed in the task".

Dr. Dutton next notes that there is one touching picture of mother and son in the Nisus and Euryalus story, Aeneid 9.283 ff. Pertinent in this connection also are Evander's farewell to his departing son, as he sends him forth with Aeneas, and his piteous sorrow when the dead body of Pallas is brought home to him (Aeneid 8.572–584, 11.158–161). Dr. Dutton reminds us that even Mezentius has two tender spots in his nature, his love for his war horse and his love for his son. This son, it will be remembered, sacrificed his own life to save his father's. Even Turnus, the man described as *audax*, *turbidus*, *fervidus*, makes appeal in his last moments to Aeneas through the latter's love for his father Anchises. See pages 16–19. C. K.

(To be concluded)

[1] Aeneid 10.501–502.
[2] Plumptre's translation, slightly altered.

LITERATURE AND LIBERALISM[1]

In his presidential address to The American Historical Association in December, 1913, Professor William A. Dunning discussed with his wonted sagacity, moderation, and persuasive humor a certain characteristic of historical research during the last hundred years. He pointed out that during this period students of history had been chiefly concerned with the discovery of the things which had actually happened rather than with the causal nexus between these occurrences. "The absorbing and relentless pursuit of the objective fact" had thus become "the typical function of the modern devotee of history". In a most interesting and illuminating way Professor Dunning went on to point out that

the course of human history is determined no more by what is true than by what men believe to be true;

that

the phenomena of social life, so far as they are determined at all by the will of man, are due in origin and sequence to conditions as they appear to contemporaries not to conditions as revealed in their reality to the historian centuries later;

and that, therefore,

we must recognize frankly that whatever a given age or people believes to be true, *is* true for that age and that people.

It follows, then, that in the attempt to understand the course of events in their relations of cause and effect it is repeatedly the error and not the fact that is important.

In the presentation of this idea Professor Dunning drew some instances from the influence of Roman history in shaping the development of Europe, from the history of the Jewish nation as a factor in the life of

[1] Amplified from a paper read at the Tenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held in the Central High School, Philadelphia, April 14, 1916. By permission of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY the paper was published in The Columbia University Quarterly, December, 1916 (19.15–29).